



Europäisches Patentamt  
European Patent Office  
Office européen des brevets



(11) Publication number:

**0 356 228 A3**

(12)

## EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(21) Application number: 89308561.3

(51) Int. Cl.<sup>5</sup>: **B07C 1/00, B07C 3/14**

(22) Date of filing: 23.08.89

(30) Priority: 23.08.88 US 234977  
08.08.89 US 391806

(43) Date of publication of application:  
28.02.90 Bulletin 90/09

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
BE CH DE FR GB IT LI NL SE

(88) Date of deferred publication of the search report:  
26.08.92 Bulletin 92/35

(71) Applicant: **PITNEY BOWES, INC.**  
World Headquarters One Elmcroft  
Stamford Connecticut 06926-0700(US)

(72) Inventor: **Connell, Richard A.**  
RR1 Lower Salem Lane  
South Salem New York 10590(US)  
Inventor: **Keating, Raymond**  
First Street Box 442  
Purdys New York 10578(US)  
Inventor: **Sansone, Ronald P.**  
4 Trails End Road  
Weston Connecticut 06883(US)  
Inventor: **Schumacher, Karl H.**  
7 Marllane  
Westport Connecticut 06880(US)

(74) Representative: **Cook, Anthony John et al**  
**D. YOUNG & CO. 10, Staple Inn**  
London, WC1V 7RD(GB)

(54) **Method and apparatus for categorizing and certifying mail.**

(57) A apparatus and method is disclosed for categorizing and optionally certifying a batch of mail. A random statistical scheme may be used. The mail will be categorized in terms of print quality, accuracy with the statement sheet accompanying the mail, deliverability, and the like so that the Post Office is relieved of having to manually inspect the mail and can arrange scheduling, equipment and manpower for the processing of such batch of mail. The mail may be certified with regard to the correctness of postage for mailing the batch.

**EP 0 356 228 A3**



European Patent  
Office

# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 89 30 8561

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 5)
Y	US-A-4 136 780 (HUNTER et al.) * Column 1, line 5 - column 2, line 29 *	1,5,8- 11,18, 19,22- 26	B 07 C 1/00 B 07 C 3/14
A		2-4,14, 16,17, 20,21, 29,31, 35	
Y	US-A-4 516 264 (CORVARI et al.) * Column 1, line 11 - column 4, line 68 *	1,8-11, 18,19, 22-26	
A		2-4,14, 16,17, 20,21, 29,31, 35	
Y	US-A-4 377 214 (HANSEN et al.) * Column 5, line 15 - column 6, line 3; figure 4 *	5	
A	US-A-3 901 797 (STORACE et al.) * Column 14, lines 33-42; column 15, lines 26-43 *	3,7,16	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 5) B 07 C
A	US-A-4 516 209 (SCRIBNER) * Column 3, line 23 - column 5, line 3 *	12,13, 21,23, 27,28	
A	US-A-4 580 226 (BENNISON) * Column 2, line 57 - column 6, line 14 *	33,35	
	---	-/-	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 26-05-1992	Examiner GOOSSENS A.M.J.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons * : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

EPO FORM 150 (01.82) (P0401)

BEST AVAILABLE COPY



European Patent  
Office

### CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

### LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet -B-

- ☒ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:

BEST AVAILABLE COPY



European Patent  
Office

# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Page 2

Application Number

EP 89 30 8561

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
A	ELECTRONICS, vol. 51, no. 26, December 1978, pages 60-61; "Mail-sorting system reads typed addresses and verifies zip codes" ---	2,3,14, 16,20, 29,35	
A	GB-A-2 188 880 (PITNEY BOWES INC.) * Page 5, lines 39-44 * ---	4,17	
A	GB-A-2 184 693 (PITNEY BOWES INC.) * Page 3, lines 82-88; page 4, lines 62-66 * ---	17,21, 30,31	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN, vol. 11, no. 103 (P-562), April 2, 1987; & JP-A-61 251 984 (RICOH CO. LTD) 08-11-1986 * Abstract * -----	21,31	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 26-05-1992	Examiner GOOSSENS A.M.J.
<b>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</b> X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

EPO FORM 1503 (01.87) (P0401)

BEST AVAILABLE COPY



European Patent  
Office

EP 89 30 8561 -B-

#### LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims 1,6-13,15,18,19,22-28,33,34 : Apparatus or method for categorizing a batch of mail by transporting mail pieces, identifying, weighing, scanning and storing data.
2. Claims 2,5,14,20,29,30,32,35 : Assigning an identification number, measuring the dimensions, determining OCR characteristics, reading, checking and comparing zipcode.
3. Claims 3,16 : Determining readability of address, deliverability, presence of codes.
4. Claims 4,15,17 : Storing post regulations, comparing and checking with regulations, determining number of incorrect mail pieces.
5. Claims 21,31 : Specific problems to print contrast, font type and mail piece reflectivity.